(b) what is the number of troops so deployed and the terms and conditions of deployment; and

(c) by when the term of deployment is likely to be over?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The Indian Armed Forces personnel are deployed in six UN Peace Keeping Missions *viz.*, Congo, Lebanon, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Sudan, Golan Heights and Ivory Coast, at present.

(b) A total of 8887 Indian Armed Forces' personnel are presently deployed in UN Peace keeping operations and UN Headquarters, New York. The terms and conditions of the personnel deployed in these missions are governed by the orders/instructions issued by the UN and Government of India including Memorandum of Understanding/ Letter of Assist signed between UN and Government of India.

(c) Each peacekeeping mission is governed by UN mandate which is reviewed from time to time.

**Protection of strategic interests in Indian Ocean Region**

2064. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) are India's growing strategic interest for unhindered economic interests in the Indian Ocean Region well protected and are adequate reconnaissance aircrafts and long-range fighters having logistic support from aircraft carrier and dedicated comparable smaller versions deployed at well-identified points;

(b) if so, does the Naval Formations also provide requisite protection to our off-shore oil exploration platform; and

(c) did any foreign intrusion in Indian Ocean Region occur during 2005 and 2006?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) India's strategic and economic interests in Indian Ocean Region are well protected and the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard are geared upto ensuring the safety of India's maritime interests. Adequate reconnaissance and surveillance of the sea areas of India's interest is also maintained by both shore-based and ship-borne surveillance aircraft. Indian Navy's ships and aircraft undertake regular patrols to ensure the safety of the country's off-shore oil exploration platforms.

(c) There is no information of any intrusion in the Indian Ocean Region during the years 2005 and 2006.

**Armed forces personnel who died in action**

2065. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Armed Forces personnel who died in action during 2007 with break up force-wise; and

(b) whether the families of the above have any outstanding claim/benefit that are yet to be cleared by the Central/State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (a) | Army | 84 |
| | Assam Rifles | 11 |
| | Border Security Force | 02 |
| | Central Industrial Security Force | 02 |
| | Central Reserve Police Force | 71 |
| | Indo-Tibetan Border Police | Nil |
| | Sashastra Sewa Bal | Nil |
| | **Total:** | **170** |

(b) The claims of the families of Armed Forces personnel dying in action are cleared within 2-3 months except in cases where documentation is not complete or court cases have been filed. However, such cases are monitored regularly at appropriate level. Review of benefits in such matters is undertaken at periodic intervals at appropriate levels.

**Collision of submarine with merchant ship in Saurashtra**

2066. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to failure to detect a ship, a submarine of the Indian Navy collided with a merchant ship in January, 2008 in the Arabian sea, off the cost of Saurashtra;

(b) if so, was it a human failure or a mechanical defect; and

(c) whether such sensitive submarines are equipped with the latest, state of the art advanced technological developed instruments so as not to compromise the national security and lives of sailors and costly submarines?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) On the 7th January, 2008, the Indian Navy submarine, INS Sindhughosh, collided with a merchant ship in the Arabian Sea. A Board of Enquiry has been constituted by the Indian Navy to investigate into the circumstances leading to the collision, in addition to the ongoing investigation by the Mercantile Marine Department, Mumbai.

(c) Yes, Sir, the submarines are appropriately equipped.

**Proposal to upgrade and modernise IMDs**

2067. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to upgrade and modernize Indian Meteorological Departments (IMDs) in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how far will this help to convey in advance accurate forecasts especially for the farming community?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir.